

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6480

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UK, RH

SUBJECT: CROSLAND'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON RHODESIA IN
PARLIAMENT

SUMMARY: HMG HAS INVITED NKOMO, MUGABE, MUZOREWA, AND /
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RHODESIAN FRONT TO THE CONFERENCE
ON RHODESIA STARTING IN GENEVA ON OCTOBER 21. CONSERVA-
TIVE PARTY MP'S PRESSED FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND FOR
FULLER EXPLANATION OF WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED OVER THE LAST
TWO MONTHS, BUT CROSLAND WOULD NOT BE DRAWN INTO ANY DE-
TAILED EXCHANGES. END SUMMARY

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY ANTHONY CROSLAND ANNOUNCED IN PAR-
LIAMENT OCTOBER 12 THAT HE HAD INVITED ROBERT MUGABE,
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BISHOP ABEL MUZOREWA, AND JOSHUA NKOMO TO REPRESENT NA-

TIONALIST INTERESTS AT THE FORTHCOMING GENEVA CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED A SIMILAR INVITATION TO IAN SMITH TO NOMINATE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RHODESIAN FRONT PARTY TO ATTEND THE MEETING. CROSLAND THEN GAVE A BROAD BACKGROUND OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE CONFERENCE AND CONCLUDED WITH A PLEA TO THE HOUSE NOT TO POSE QUESTIONS WHICH MIGHT COMPLICATE THE DELICATE PROCESS UNDER WAY. REFERRING TO THE RECENT DELUGE OF STATEMENTS ON RHODESIA FROM MANY SOURCES, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID, "I HOPE THE HOUSE WILL NOT PRESS ME TO COMMENT ON THESE STATEMENTS, NOR ON THE NEGOTIATING POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONFERENCE. IT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO BECOME EMBROILED, BEFORE THE CONFERENCE HAS OPENED, IN A PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF ISSUES WHICH CAN ONLY BE DECIDED AT THE CONFERENCE ITSELF."

2. THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, HOWEVER, WAS NOT TO BE PUT OFF. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY SINCE THE SUMMER RECESS, TORY MP'S LAUNCHED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS WHICH CROSLAND PARRIED MORE WITH BLUNT INSTRUMENTS THAN SHARP ONES. TIME AND AGAIN THE CONSERVATIVES SOUGHT AN EXPLANATION OF THE SMITH PROPOSALS. WHO HAD AGREED TO WHAT, AND BY IMPLICATION WHETHER WHITEHALL ITSELF HAD CONFUSED THE MATTER. JUST AS FREQUENTLY, CROSLAND FELL BACK ON A FORMULA OF WORDS WHICH DESCRIBED THE PROPOSALS AS "A USEFUL BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS." ALTHOUGH MAKING IT CLEAR THAT HMG DID NOT REGARD THE PROPOSALS AS A "PACKAGE DEAL," THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AVOIDED PRECISE QUESTIONS BY REFUSING TO COMMENT ON EXCHANGES BETWEEN OTHER GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES, E.G., THE KISSINGER MEETINGS WITH SOUTHERN AFRICAN LEADERS.

3. PERHAPS THE MOST UNSETTLING QUESTION CAME FROM ENOCH POWELL: "DOES MR. CROSLAND AGREE THAT BY ACCEPTING A POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT POWER THE UNITED KINGDOM IS INCURRING THE ALMOST CERTAIN PROSPECT OF HUMILIATION WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST OFF-SETTING ADVANTAGE TO ANY OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED?" CROSLAND ANSWERED THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT ABDICATE ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MATTER, BUT POWELL'S QUESTION EXPRESSED THE QUIET MIS-

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GIVINGS OF MANY OBSERVERS IN WHITEHALL AND PARLIAMENT.

4. ONE FURTHER QUESTIONER ASKED WHY ONLY MEMBERS OF THE RHODESIAN FRONT PARTY WOULD REPRESENT THE WHITE COMMUNITY AT GENEVA TO THE EXCLUSION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF MORE LIBERAL WHITE THINKING. "MR. SMITH HAS MADE IT CLEAR," CROSLAND SAID, "THAT HE WOULD PREFER THE WHITE RHODESIAN DELEGATES TO COME FROM THE RHODESIAN FRONT AND

THERE WAS NO PRESSURE IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM ANY
OF THE AFRICAN NATIONALIST LEADERS."

ARMSTRONG

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